

Best Management Practice (BMP) Guidance for Spot Burning

Agricultural Burning Practices & Research Task Force

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Background

All burning by commercial agricultural operations require a permit except when burning orchard prunings, natural vegetation along fence lines, irrigation and drainage ditches or natural vegetation blown by the wind. A grower must still comply with their fire protection authorities notification/approval process prior to igniting any outdoor fire even if an air quality permit is not required.

There are four types of agricultural burn permits; spot burn, bale burn, field burn, and orchard tear-out burn.

What is a "spot burn" and when is it applicable?

A spot burn permit provides permission to burn unforeseen and unpredictable small areas because the burning is reasonably necessary and there is no practical alternative to the burning. This permit is most commonly used for small weed patches, spots of heavy residue, and equipment plugs and dumps. The spot burning permit is not intended for burning entire fields even though the fields are less than ten acres.

When would I need a "spot burn permit" versus a "field burn permit"?

- 1) A field burn permit application should be completed for any burning which is definable and predictable.
- 2) Any individual burn area which consists of over five acres would be considered a field and would require a field permit.

General guidance associated with spot burn permits.

- 1) A spot burn permit allows for the burning up to ten acres total area per year and is good for the calendar year in which it is issued.
- 2) The cost for a spot burn permit is \$25.00 which is split evenly between the research account and the local permitting office.
- 3) No more than one acre may be burned per day without calling and following the agricultural burn hotline or by special permission directly from Ecology if it is a "no burn" day.
- 4) Burning is to occur during daylight hours only (sunrise to sunset).
- 5) For spots of less than one acre, situations may come up that make it impractical calling the burn hotline. In such cases, please make every attempt to burn only when emissions will be minimized (i.e. midday). You must follow your local fire protection authority burn notification/approval procedures.
- 6) A map outlining the boundaries of the area (farm) in which the spot burning will occur must be attached to the spot burn application, even though each individual spot may not be definable on the map.
- 7) The permit legal description shall include all section, township, ranges that the farm encompasses.
- 8) A statement of the permit conditions must be signed and the top copy returned with each permit applied for.